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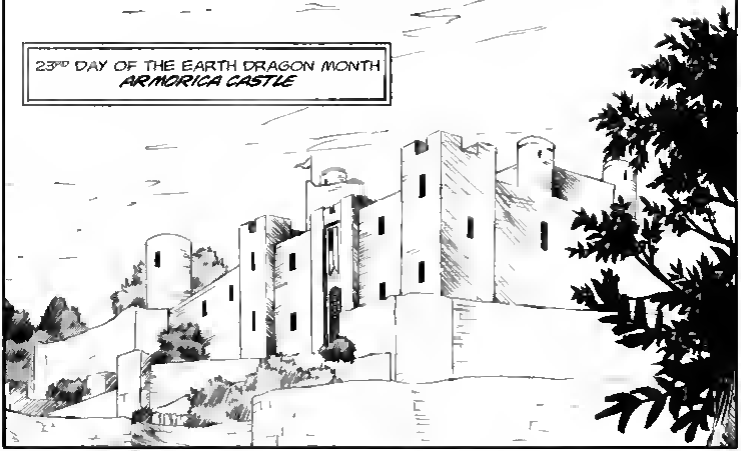
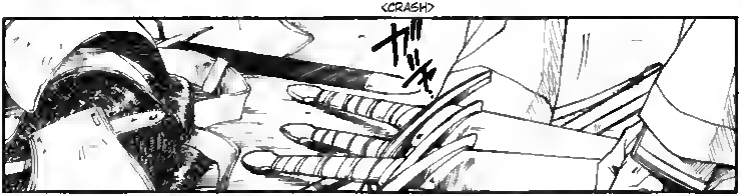

23RD DAY OF THE EARTH DRAGON MONTH
ARMORICA CASTLE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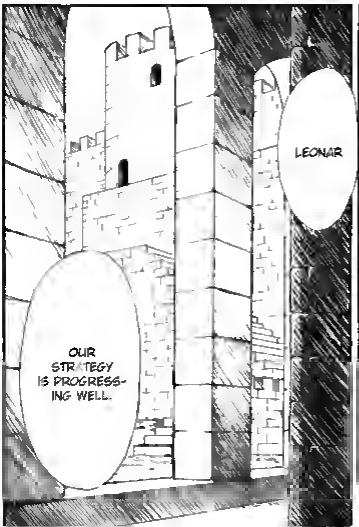
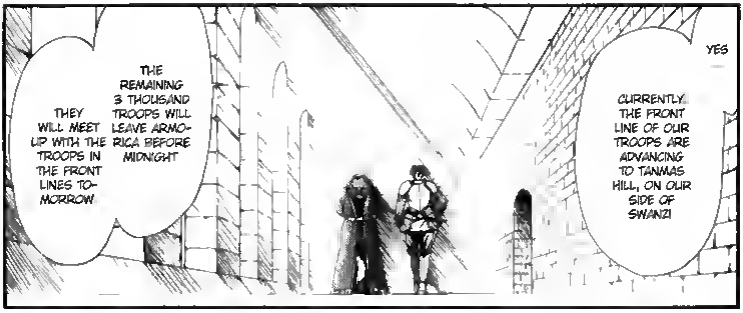
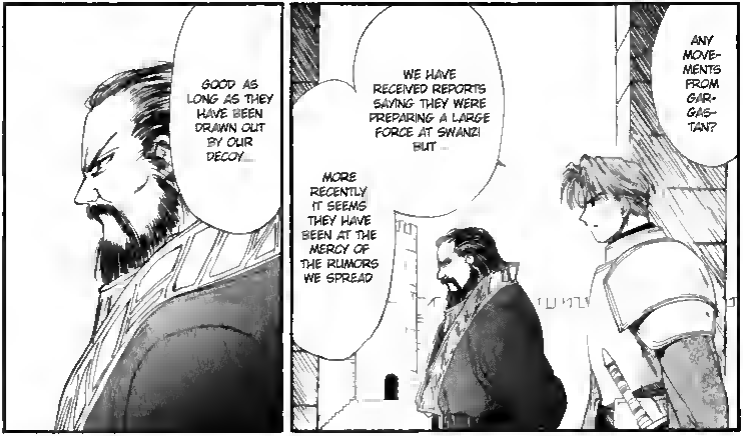
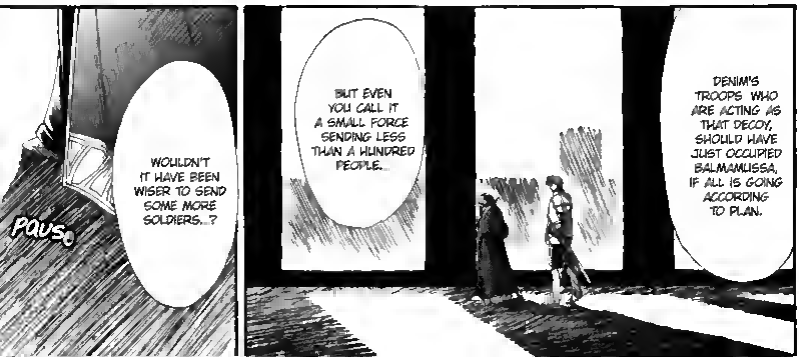

LEONAR
OUR STRATEGY IS PROGRESSING WELL.


YES
CURRENTLY, THE FRONT LINE OF OUR TROOPS ARE ADVANCING TO TANMAS HILL, ON OUR SIDE OF SWANZI
THE REMAINING 3 THOUSAND TROOPS WILL LEAVE ARMORICA BEFORE MIDNIGHT
THEY WILL MEET UP WITH THE TROOPS IN THE FRONT LINES TOMORROW


ANY MOVEMENTS FROM GARGASTAN?
WE HAVE RECEIVED REPORTS SAYING THEY WERE PREPARING A LARGE FORCE AT SWANZI BUT...
MORE RECENTLY IT SEEMS THEY HAVE BEEN AT THE MERCY OF THE RUMORS WE SPREAD
GOOD AS LONG AS THEY HAVE BEEN DRAWN OUT BY OUR DECOY.


DENIM'S TROOPS WHO ARE ACTING AS THAT DECOY, SHOULD HAVE JUST OCCUPIED BALMAMUSSA, IF ALL IS GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN.
BUT EVEN YOU CALL IT A SMALL FORCE SENDING LESS THAN A HUNDRED PEOPLE.
WOULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN WISER TO SEND SOME MORE SOLDIERS...?
PAUSE

ARE YOU TELLING ME TO GIVE MORE SOLDIERS TO A DECOY TROOP?
A DECOY NEEDS ONLY TO DRAW OUT THE ENEMY. DENIM SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT AS WELL!
IT'S NOT SOME-THING TO WORRY ABOUT RIGHT NOW!
WE ONLY NEED TO FOCUS ALL OF OUR STRENGTH
ON THE INCOMING FULL-ON BATTLE WITH GARGASTAN
...
DON'T WORRY, LEONAR.
OUR PLAN IS PERFECT...
...IT IS AS YOU SAY...

...m.
Denm...
Don't cry, Denm
use those eyes to gaze straight at the truth!
You should
And choose...
a better path...

For the sake of the "future" that is to come...
for a path...
You should...
and make the better choice...
Gaze straight at the truth.

Father!

HEY, DENIM'S AWAKE!
OH!
HE'S AWAKE!
IT'S ALRIGHT NOW!
AH
I

EVERY-ONE WAS WORRIED, DENIM
SISTER
IT'S GOOD YOU'VE COME TO
slide

You and everyone else..
JUST WHAT DID I...
YOU WERE LYING THERE
WHEN WE CAME RUNNING OVER.
The blood and the rain were running together...
For a moment, I thought it was too late...
AND CANOPUS AND THE OTHERS?!
WHAT ABOUT VOLTEL?!
VOL-TEL!

I'M HERE.
FWOOO
I'M STILL ALIVE...
FWOOO
CANOPUS IS FINE, TOO.
HE WOULDN'T DIE SO EASILY.
REALLY? I'M GLAD...
BUT IF WE HAD FOUND HIM EVEN A LITTLE BIT LATER
DEMI-HUMANS HAVE QUITE SOME STRENGTH IN THEM... I'M VERY IMPRESSED.
FWOOOOOO

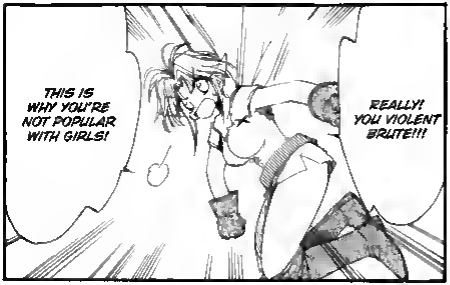
DENIM
squeeze
We probably would not have been able to help...
Kachua
THE SAME GOES FOR YOU

HEY, DENIM!
SHADDUP! BEHAVE!
OWWW!!! LET GO!!!
OH, CANO- WHAT PUS IS IT?
COULD SHE BE A GARGASTAN SPY OR SOMETHING?
I FOUND A SUSPICIOUS FAIRY WHO'D ENTERED OUR COMPARTMENT AND WAS JUST HANGING AROUND.
I TOLD YOU, I'M NOT—!!

YOU'RE...
TTTIS...
...
HUH?!
That's why!!
I'VE BEEN TELLING YOU THAT ALL ALONG!
That I'm not suspicious!!!
YOU KNOW HER, DENIM? THIS LITTLE THING ?
ボカ
HURY UP AND LET GO OF ME! YOU BIRD MAN!
OUCH!!!
WHY YOU!!! YOU CALLED ME A BIRD JUST NOW, DIDN'T YOU?!
Eeek!
Though I think it's dead-on ..
PLEASE LET HER GO, CANOPUS....

EEK!
flick
THERE YOU GO.

SHE'S NOT A BAD PERSON
Ohhhhh


REALLY! YOU VIOLENT BRUTE!!!
THIS IS WHY YOU'RE NOT POPULAR WITH GIRLS!

YOU'RE STILL HERE...?
YOU DIDN'T GO BACK TO YOUR FRIENDS?

AH...
THAT IS...

I... I WAS JUST...
I WAS JUST INTERESTED IN THE BATTLE YOU KNOW?
WE'RE NOT PLAYING AROUND.
IF YOU CAME JUST OUT OF INTEREST,
I'D LIKE YOU TO STOP.

It's just that...
your heart is...
I...
JUST...
I DON'T THINK IT'S A GAME, EITHER!
TH-THAT'S NOT IT!
I...
...I DON'T WANT THIS WAR TO TAKE ANY MORE INNOCENT VICTIMS.
SO YOU SHOULD LEAVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
...UGH!
DENIM?!
DOES IT STILL HURT?
MY HEALING POWERS ARE ALSO WEAKENING...
LET ME SEE...

HOLD STILL.
TI...
<BREATHE>
<FLASH>

THE RECOVERY ABILITY CHARACTERISTIC OF FAIRIES
THIS IS
SSSS
The pain...
TTTS
sigh
is going away...
THIS IS MY THANKS FOR SAVING ME EARLIER
DON'T GET ANY WEIRD IDEAS.

EVEN I...
I AM NOT HERE OUT OF INTEREST.
I ADMIT, AT FIRST I WAS WATCHING BECAUSE IT SEEMED AMUSING, BUT...
BUT AFTER SEEING EVERYONE HURTING, BLEEDING AND FIGHTING SO HARD...
I WONDERED IF SOMEONE AS SMALL AS ME
COULD DO SOMETHING
THANK YOU, TITIS.
I APOLOGIZE FOR THE HARSH WORDS.
!

YOU'RE JUST A PUNY FAIRY.
WHAT ARE YOU GETTING ALL RED FOR?
"JUST"?! WHAT THE HECK?! YOU'RE A RUDE ONE, AREN'T YA!!
CANOPUS, ARE YOU REALLY FEELING BETTER NOW?
YOUR INJU-RIES
YEAH, NO SWEAT I'M BUILT DIFFERENTLY, AFTER ALL!
EVEN IF YOU WEREN'T FEELING ALL RIGHT, I WOULDN'T GIVE YOU A "PRETTY KISS"!
What's so pretty about it?!
Bleeeh!
...I wouldn't even ask for one... such an embarrassing recovery spell

You're asking for it, shrimp!
I'M TELLING YOU, I'M NOT A BIRD!
Eek!
HMPH!!!
A BIRD LIKE YOU WOULDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT PRETTINESS ANYWAY!
I hate little creatures and women with big breasts!
Well sorry!
BALMAMUSSA HAS FALLEN ACCORDING TO PLAN
BUT...

AND OCCUPY THE PORT CITY OF ITS WEST... ASHTON.
WE'LL MAKE IT SEEM LIKE WE'RE GOING TO ATTACK CORTAINI CASTLE,
?!
THE QUESTION NOW IS, WILL IT DIVIDE THE ENEMY FORCES?
IF THEIR BATTLE STRENGTH DOESN'T SPLIT UP
WE WILL MAKE IT HAPPEN.
...!
I SEE!
WHEN YOU SAY ASHTON,
DO YOU MEAN GARGASTAN'S MOST IMPORTANT OVERSEAS TRADE ROUTE?
WHY THERE?
IF WE CONQUER BOTH BALMAMUSSA AND ASHTON, THERE WILL BE NO MORE EXITS TO THE SEA
...?!

CORITANI CASTLE
PORT CITY ASHTON
SWANZI FOREST
ZODO MARSH
VORDUE LAKESIDE
TANMAS HILL
BALMAMUSSA VILLAGE
YES.
FOR US PEOPLE OF VALERIA ISLAND, "OVERSEAS TRADE" IS AN INDISPENSABLE WAY OF LIFE
IF THAT HAPPENS, WHETHER GARGASTAN BELIEVES THE RUMORS WE SPREAD OR NOT,
THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SPLIT THEIR FORCES INTO TWO.
MORE-OVER, FOR A LANDLOCKED SEAT OF POWER LIKE CORITANI CASTLE,
HAVING ASHTON'S PORT OCCUPIED IS LIKE HAVING ITS "LIFELINE" CUT.
THAT IS DUKE RONWAY'S AIM...
IN USING THIS STRATEGY

IS LIKE PASSING RIGHT BEFORE THE ENEMY'S EYES..
THAT'S RECKLESS! JUST TO GET THROUGH ZODO MARSH
suddenly
WAIT A MINUTE!
YOU'RE GOING TO ASHTON WITH YOUR CURRENT NUMBERS?
WE KNOW FULL WELL IT'LL BE DIFFICULT
WILL EVERYONE'S STRENGTH LAST?
TO DO IT WHILE DRAWING OUT THAT ENEMY...
STILL
THE FUTURE OF WALSTA WILL BE DECIDED
ON WHETHER THIS PLAN SUCCEEDS OR NOT
BUT FOR US TO WIN, WE NEED TO ACT NOW.

I WILL BIDE MY TIME...
IT'S ALL RIGHT... WE CAN STILL PRESS ON!
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
I DON'T INTEND TO WASTE MY LIFE JUST BECAUSE I ACCEPTED TO BE A DECOY.
That's the responsibility of the mission I was given—
EVEN IF... AGAINST ALL ODDS
WE FAIL TO DISPERSE THEIR TROOPS,
IT IS STILL POSSIBLE TO WEAKEN GARGASTAN THROUGH AN ECONOMIC BLOCKADE
FOR US WHO ARE ACTING AS DECOY,
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

neglect to use my own judgement!
CLENCH
I can no longer...
IF YOU JUDGE THAT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE THEN YOU SHOULD WITHDRAW IMMEDIATELY
I LEAVE EVERYTHING IN YOUR HANDS, SIR HERO.
WHAT IS THE STATE OF OUR TROOPS' INJURIES AFTER BALMAMUSSA?
EH...
AH!
YES...!
CLACK
EIGHT SOLDIERS DIED IN BATTLE
...
THE MAJORITY OF OUR FORCES ARE INJURED, BUT THEY ARE CURRENTLY RECOVERING AND MOST CAN MOVE.
HOWEVER... AMONG THEM, TWO HAVE LOST THEIR EYES OR LIMBS AND ARE SERIOUSLY INJURED...

...!
I DON'T INTEND TO FORCE EVERYONE TO FIGHT
DENIM?
NO MATTER HOW INJURED OR CLOSE TO FALLING MY COMPANION IS...
WHETHER OR NOT YOU WILL TAKE UP ARMS IS UP TO YOU.
BUT I WILL ALSO SAY THIS.
I WILL NOT THROW AWAY MY SWORD.
EVEN IF IN THE COURSE OF BATTLE, HE DIES AND BECOMES A CORPSE...

I WILL PASS ON THAT CORPSE, AND WITH THIS SWORD...
FOR THE SAKE OF VICTORY AND FOR OUR FALLEN COMRADES!
I WILL END UP VICTORIOUS AND PRESS ON!

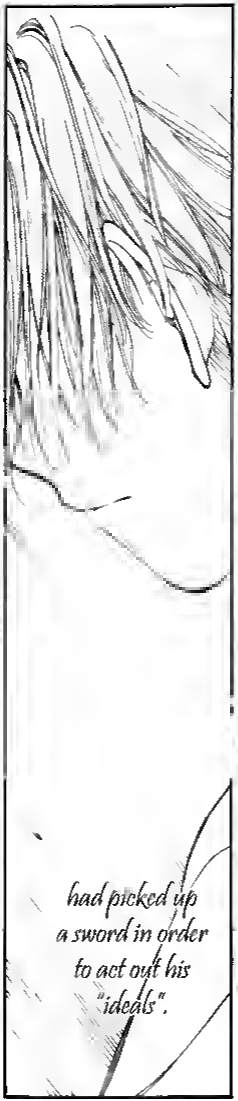
He's putting on a good expression now.
Really, this guy...

move people's hearts this much
As someone who can
It's hard to believe he was involved in the massacre of his own countrymen...
I just don't understand...
WE MUST ADVANCE TO ZODO MARSH BY THE TIME THE SUN SETS!
DON'T JUST IDLE AROUND!

I WONDER
WHERE THAT PERSON WENT.
IF YOU SEE ANYTHING ELSE THAT MIGHT BE USEFUL, TAKE THAT, TOO!
AH, AND CAN SOMEONE GO COLLECT ARROWS?
There he is—
slip
Ah!

I felt I understood.
At that moment...

That sword, which deeply injured even his own heart...


had picked up a sword in order to act out his "ideals".

The one people called the "Blood-Stained Hero"...

was a "Double-Edged Blade".
This?
...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?!
YOU CAN'T SLACK OFF WHEN EVERY-ONE ELSE IS SO BUSY PREPARING TO MOVE OUT!
WH...
EH.
EEK!
AH... UM...

I WONDER
HOW FAR MY VOICE WILL REACH IN THIS LAND
HUH?
jangle
slide
HEY, DENIM. I WANTED TO ASK
WHY DID YOU SUPPORT THE MASSACRE OF YOUR OWN COUNTRYMEN?

WE,
THE FEW PEOPLE KNOWN AS WALSTA,
FOUND THAT IT WAS THE ONLY PATH...
FOR US TO SURVIVE.
IN THESE TIMES OF WAR. IN THESE TIMES WHEN GREAT FORCES MOVE.
YOU CAN'T ACHIEVE ANYTHING JUST BY SIMPLY TALKING ABOUT YOUR "IDEALS".
YOU CAN'T CHANGE ANYTHING JUST BY SIMPLY STRUGGLING AGAINST THE GREAT CURRENTS
THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO CHANGE IT
EVEN IF I STAIN THESE HANDS OF MINE, IT DOESN'T MATTER
AS LONG AS I CHANGED THE REALITY IN FRONT OF ME

Such a world is the one I'd like to build...

ARE NOT SINS.
TTTIS, WHAT I BEAR.
GOING TO CARRY THAT "SIN" AND LIVE ON?
ARE YOU
THEY ARE "LIVES".
THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED
REMINDS ME OF THEIR WEIGHT...
THE CONSE-QUENCES FOR HANDING DOWN MY OWN JUDGE-MENT...
What Lancelot meant at that time...
about not dying...

THAT IS...
THE RESPONSIBILITY CALLED "LIFE".
I feel I understand that now.

He still sacrificed his heart in order to fight.
it is him who's hurting the most, and yet...
More than anyone else,
Even though he carries the weight of all those lives,
he still chose the most painful, cruelest path
TTTIS...?
IF ONLY MY POWER
COULD HEAL THOSE WOUNDS FOR YOU...

THANK YOU.
YOU'RE KIND, TITIS
LET'S GO.

Accepting [illegible] directive to disrupt the Gargastan forces, [illegible] Knights of Walstas forces successfully reached Balmamussa. Their next [illegible] is to occupy [illegible] city of Ashton. Ashton is a critical point of overseas [illegible] for [illegible] Gargastan, [illegible] stronghold is the landlocked Coritani Castle. For [illegible] of [illegible] which is completely surrounded by water, losing a port of overseas [illegible] could be said to [illegible] to having one's lifeline cut... [illegible] leader of the Holy Dragon Knights, Denim Powell, [illegible] is leading a small force of [illegible] than 100 people, has come to [illegible] decision to act as the "decoy." Their strenuous [illegible] has now commenced once more...